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FACT SHEET

USAID ADVANCES U.S. INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT ON AVIAN FLU

At a Glance

- Avian influenza (AI) H5N1 is a top priority for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and current agency initiatives focus on containing avian influenza in animals, and limiting its spread among people. International activities are being implemented in Asia and the Near East, Europe and Eurasia, Africa, and in Latin America and the Caribbean. Overall, USAID is committing \$155 million in foreign aid for avian flu activities in 46 countries.
- To date, USAID has provided \$54 million in assistance and grants to affected and at-risk countries, and will obligate an additional \$101 million in avian influenza assistance by June 1, 2006. USAID is using these funds to implement programs regionally and through USAID missions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international partners like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). USAID also collaborates with other U.S. Government departments, private-sector partners, local governments and organizations for pandemic preparedness and response.
- As the H5N1 virus has spread throughout Asia and the Near East, Europe and Eurasia, and Africa, USAID has provided support for rapid outbreak response by setting aside international emergency funds for rapid response to new H5N1 outbreaks. These funds are used to provide in-country assistance and commodities for first responders.
- Agency priorities for avian influenza programs focus on five key objectives for improved readiness and response capacity: planning and preparedness, surveillance, essential supplies and equipment (stockpiling), communications, and outbreak response.

Key Objectives for International Action

(1) PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS activities support a country's ability to build capacity for monitoring, detection, and response to avian influenza in order to prevent further spread and lessen its impact on animal and human populations.

- In collaboration with its partners, USAID is supporting international planning and preparedness by providing technical assistance to develop and support national avian and pandemic influenza task forces and preparedness plans in 46 countries.

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For example, in Madagascar, a tabletop outbreak simulation exercise conducted in March by the Government of Madagascar, with support from USAID and other U.S. government agencies, helped to identify weaknesses and resource needs in case of a large-scale disease outbreak. The exercise supported the implementation of Madagascar's national AI plan. USAID has also supported preparedness meetings with its missions in Asia and the Near East, Europe and Eurasia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and has supported regional coordination. In April 2006, a USAID-supported regional coordination meeting, hosted by WHO and FAO, was held in Ankara, Turkey. Technical, working-level delegations from the ministries of health and agriculture from Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iran, Iraq and Syria focused on promoting cross-border collaboration and information-sharing on avian influenza activities including the sharing of H5N1 samples and monitoring of migratory birds and cross-border trade of poultry. Follow-up coordination among neighboring countries in these areas is anticipated.

(2) SURVEILLANCE is a country's ability to detect cases of avian influenza in animals, and influenza-like illnesses in people. USAID is providing support for resources, like diagnostic equipment, and experts to provide assistance for enhanced surveillance capacity on national and regional levels.

- USAID works with host governments and non-governmental partners to strengthen disease detection efforts, such as in Iraq during October 2005, when USAID and other U.S. Government partners assisted Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture and the Kurdistan Regional Government in the formation of veterinary-agricultural surveillance teams. The teams were trained to collect samples from farms with high levels of poultry mortality and to test for the avian influenza type-A virus, and use global positioning systems to track the geographic spread of the disease. Support was also provided to Iraq to convene inter-ministerial meetings that led to the formulation of a national response plan to prepare for a possible outbreak of avian influenza. USAID also works with international partners to strengthen surveillance efforts. For example, in collaboration with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, USAID provided \$6 million in 2005 to develop early warning systems for detecting avian influenza outbreaks through community-based field surveillance and enhanced public awareness in Southeast Asia.

(3) STOCKPILING of essential supplies and equipment ensures that necessary diagnostic and protective materials are immediately available when and if an avian influenza outbreak occurs.

- USAID has dedicated \$56 million for an international stockpile of essential supplies and equipment for avian influenza-related activities, and is building a global stockpile of 1.5 million sets of personal protective equipment (PPE) and 15,000 decontamination kits for rapid deployment. PPE contains needed handling materials to prevent human exposure to the H5N1 virus, such as gloves, masks and body suits.

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To date, USAID has deployed more than 36,000 sets of PPE for first responders to outbreaks in 22 countries in Asia and the Near East, Europe and Eurasia, and Africa. The Agency also provides technical assistance for controlling avian influenza and is deploying kits for proper sample collection and transport to laboratories for verification of H5N1.

(4) COMMUNICATION is key to creating awareness among the public about avian influenza and risk factors, how to limit its spread, and what to do if it is suspected. Working through global programs, private partners, non-governmental organizations and local governments, USAID is supporting communications activities in 34 countries, including increased public outreach and the development of targeted communications strategies and educational materials.

- In Azerbaijan, USAID's agricultural development project has printed and distributed leaflets on avian influenza to target populations, and has adapted television public-service announcements (PSAs), originally developed by USAID/Ukraine. The PSAs have been broadcast on Azeri television.

(5) OUTBREAK RESPONSE activities are focused on building capacity of animal and health workers to respond to H5N1 outbreaks using methods that limit further spread of the virus. USAID is supporting efforts in 20 countries for improved animal culling and disposal practices and for enhanced biosecurity procedures in poultry-raising settings. For human response efforts, USAID provides support for supplies, training in case management and infection control, and assistance for development of procedures at health facilities.

- In Indonesia, USAID is supporting FAO to establish an emergency team of experts to battle against avian influenza in poultry and establish local disease control centers in hot-spot areas. These centers offer up-to-date information and will train animal health technicians and veterinarians in how to carry out rapid disease investigations and implement control measures, such as culling, vaccination, and biosecurity.

For more information on USAID's avian flu programs, visit
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/home/News/news_items/avian_influenza.html

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